

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6129

S E C R E T TANANARIVE 0420

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TSPW, MA, US

SUBJ: NASA STATION NEGOTIATIONS

REFS: A) TANANARIVE 0327; DEL TANANARIVE 0399

BEGIN SUMMARY: MALAGASY HEAD OF GOVT GEN RAMANANTSOA HAS DECIDED ACCEPT U.S. PROPOSAL FOR THREE-YEAR EXTENSION OF NASA STATION AGREEMENT. THIS INFO MUST, HOWEVER, BE VERY CLOSELY HELD WITHIN U.S.G. UNTIL RAMANANTSOA HAS PERSONALLY INFORMED FONMIN RATSIRAKA OF HIS DECISION, PROBABLY SOME TIME IN EARLY APRIL. ANY PRIOR LEAK TO RATSIRAKA OR TO MALAGASY EMBASSY WASH COULD LEAD TO RECONSIDERATION OF DECISION. END SUMMARY.

1. GEN RAMANANTSOA HAS TAKEN DECISION APPROVE EXTENSION OF NASA STATION FOR THREE YEARS, ACCORDING TO MIN TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT GEN ANDRIAMHAZO. LATTER GAVE ME THIS INFORMATION AT BALL HELD UNDER HIS PATRONAGE SATURDAY EVENING, 30MAR BY "SYNDICAT D'INITIATIVE" OF HIS NATIVE VILLAGE.

2. ANDRIAMHAZO SAID HE GOT MIN ECON & FINANCE RAMAROSON TO JOIN HIM IN TAKING CASE AGAIN TO GEN RAMANANTSOA AND OBTAINED FAVORABLE DECISION. RAMANANTSOA HIMSELF WILL INFORM RATSIRAKA OF DECISION. WHEN I REMARKED THAT RATSIRAKA MAY WELL BE ABROAD UNTIL END APRIL FOR OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING AND SPECIAL SESSION UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ANDRIAMHAZO SAID RAMANANTSOA WOULD SUMMON HIM BACK PROBABLY ABOUT 10APR TO TELL HIM OF DECISION.

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3. SINCE UNGA TO START 09APR, I WOULD ASSUME HOWEVER THAT, IF RATS-

IRAKA TO BE SUMMONED BACK TO BE GIVEN DECISION, IT MORE LIKELY BE BETWEEN TWO MEETINGS HE ATTENDING. IT COULD THEREFORE OCCUR AS EARLY AS THIS COMING WEEKEND.

4. IT REMAINS ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE THAT INFO ON RAMANANTSOA'S DECISION ABOUT NASA STATION BE EXTREMELY TIGHTLY HELD WITHIN USG. AS INDICATED REFTTEL B, ANY LEAK TO RATSIRAKA OR MALAGASY EMBASSY WASH PRIOR TO RAMANANTSOA'S INFORMING RATSIRAKA COULD WELL REOPEN ENTIRE ISSUE AGAIN.

5. FOLLOWING ARE PRINCIPAL FACTORS IN MY VIEW WHICH HAVE LED TO FAVORABLE DECISION ON EXTENSION OF NASA STATION:

(A) FRIENDSHIP FOR U.S. AND GREAT HELP OF ANDRIAMHAZO, MOTIVATED BY HIS DESIRE KEEP MADAGASCAR WITH WEST AND CONCERN OVER ITS SLIPPING TOWARD EAST.

(B) FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF NASA STATION TO MALAGASY ECONOMY, INCLUDING RENT AND ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS PAYMENT. ANDRIAMHAZO NOTED TO ME THAT LATTER IS ESSENTIAL TO HELP MADAGASCAR PAY OFF EARTH STATION DEBT.

(C) U.S. WILLINGNESS TO MALAGASIZE STATION WITHIN THREE-YEAR PERIOD FROM 1973 AND FLEXIBILITY OF OUR APPROACH TOWARD THIS SUBJECT. ANDRIAMHAZO SAID THAT PHRASE I PLACED IN LETTER I SENT HIM ON 27MAR ON PRELIMINARY PLAN FOR MALAGASIZATION STATING THAT PLAN "IS INDICATIVE ONLY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS DEVELOPMENTS MAY REQUIRE" WAS PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN HELPING CONVINCE RAMANANTSOA TO TAKE FAVORABLE DECISION.

(D) TYING OF RAILROAD LOAN TO NASA STATION AGREEMENT IN DISCREET MANNER IN WHICH WE DID.

6. DETAILED NEGOTIATION OF TEXTS WILL PRESUMABLY COMMENCE AFTER RAMANANTSOA HAS INFORMED RATSIRAKA OF DECISION. I BELIEVE WE SHALL HAVE TO WORK OUT SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH MALAGASY OFFICIALS:

(A) AGREEMENT, PROBABLY IN FORM EXCHANGE OF NOTES, FOR EXTENSION OF NASA STATION,

(B) LEASE FOR RENTAL OF LAND FOR STATION, AND

(C) CONTRACT WITH MALAGASY COOPERATING AGENCY (PTT) FOR GRADUAL CONTRACT AS ESSENTIAL PART OF NEW AGREEMENT AND THUS TO INSIST ON ITS SIMULTANEOUS NEGOTIATION. CHANNEL FOR WORKING OUT DETAILED TEXTS EXPECTED TO BE WORKING-LEVEL TEAMS OF TWO SIDES WHICH HAVE ALREADY MET SEVERAL TIMES DURING PAST FEW MONTHS.

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MENDENHALL

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